Treasure House

Jalisco

IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

February | 2023

Overview of this Children's Home

Background, Mission, & Vision

Treasure House was started in 2017 by Director Karen David, who has served as a missionary to Mexico since 1999. Karen felt called to start a "Safe Home" that is hidden from the public eye for sexually exploited girls, the only known one of its kind in Jalisco. She has been "Mama Karen" to many girls since the establishment of the home, which takes in girls ages 13 and under who can stay as long as they want. This home is unique because they have chosen to keep the number of girls they serve to less than 16 in order to maintain a family environment.

The mission of Treasure House is to extend the love of Jesus by providing a safe and comfortable home where young girls who have been sexually exploited can begin the restoration process. The home provides a second chance at life - a life of abundance - for those who they've been blessed to care for. The goal is to stop the cycle and anguish of generational trauma and give the girls a chance to begin anew.

The long-term vision of Treasure House is to eventually become a foster home instead of an orphanage. In Mexico, the foster care system provides more stability than a traditional orphanage. Once in the foster care system, children are viewed as being on the path to adoption and therefore, much less likely to be moved into another orphanage. This gives more authority to the facility to help determine the course of action of the girls. Treasure House would like to expand and have 2 more family-oriented homes and within the next 2 years, they hope to exclusively serve girls who are in foster care.

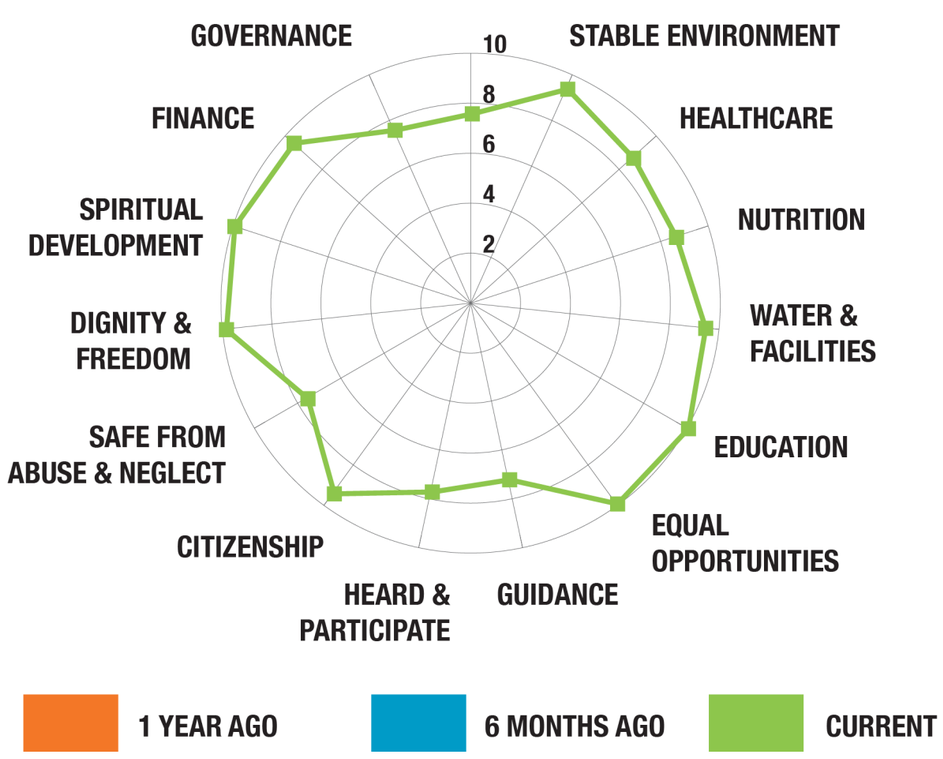
The Thrive Assessment

What is the Thrive Assessment?

In 1959, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which defines children's rights to protection, education, healthcare, shelter, nutrition and more. We have codified all 13 Rights, as well as a Finance Standard and a Governance and Human Resource Standard, resulting in a total of 15 standards. These standards ensure that children receive care that truly helps them to thrive, now and in the future.

The Thrive Assessment will be administered every 6 months with each partner home to chart the progress of each standard. Our team works with caregivers to outline next steps which and compiled into an Improvement Road-map.

Current Thrive Scale



Strategic Initiatives

REMODELING THE "TRANSITION HOME" FOR GIRLS 18+

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	The home would like to remodel an area on the property to have housing for girls ages 18+. It has three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen space ideal for the girls to live more independently as they transition into adulthood or pursue higher education. The total cost needed for this project is $540,015 MXN ($30,000 USD).
ESTIMATED FUNDING	$30,000 USD

CIVIL PROTECTION TRAINING

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	The home needs Protección Civil Training. This training involves training staff on emergency measures and CPR. The home has been unable to do this training due to moving into a new home and not having the deed at the time. The cost is to be determined.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	$ To be Determined

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Treasure House needs an administrative staff member. Someone who can be in charge of keeping files for staff and children in order. Who can also take on the responsibilities of making medical and dental appointments for the girls and helping write and formalize policies for the home? A new staff member at $80 MXN/hr for part-time work (20 hrs) would cost $6400 MXN/month ($353 USD) and $76,800 MXN/year (USD $4236).
ESTIMATED FUNDING	$4236 USD/year

Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING | **SUSTAINING** | THRIVING

Treasure House is at the level of **SUSTAINING** in this area. The home currently has 11 girls and chooses to not have more than 15 girls at a time to be able to give them individualized care and attention. The director is the primary caregiver with 2 caregivers working during the day 5-6 days a week. Because the home is for trafficked and exploited girls, they do not promote visitations unless DIF sets it up outside of the home. Most caregivers have been trained in TBRI. In the past, the training has happened once a year but is planned to happen at least 2 times this year. All staff have been at the home for more than two years and act as a family to the girls. The director has weekly meetings with the staff and a behavioral specialist to discuss how to work with the girls. Caregivers are also mentored by the director on how to create a home environment. There is no official onboarding plan for caregivers, but the director makes sure to get references, background checks, and psych evaluations as well as interviewing and setting expectations before hiring.

To improve in this area the home needs to create an official onboarding plan for new staff and caregivers. To promote sibling bonding the home can encourage sibling groups to spend time together. Setting up a time for caregivers to be evaluated by a therapist on the standard of care for the kids is encouraged.

- ☐ Create an onboarding plan for caregivers
- ☐ Encourage sibling bonding
- ☐ Evaluate caregivers on standards of care

Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

The home is currently at a **THRIVING** level in this area. The director and caregivers make sure that the girls know what the rules are and why they are in place. Currently, they are working on establishing a more positive discipline approach, but the consequences are age appropriate. The home works as a single family group that does everything together. The director meets with staff and coaches on how to create a more stable, loving environment. There is a behavioral specialist that meets with the staff and the girls once a week. Caregivers have been there for 2+ years and are consistent in the lives of the girls. The caregivers also play, eat meals and usually go to church with the girls. The home has extracurricular activities that include English, Tae Kwon Do, and horseback riding, but would like to find more activities for the girls. The girls have a movie night on Fridays and birthdays are celebrated together by occasionally doing something special like going to the water park or movie theater.

- ☐ Establish a more positive discipline approach

Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

Currently, the home is at a **THRIVING** level in this area. Soap and water are readily available for girls to use in a hygienic manner and caregivers encourage girls to wash their hands. The teens have access to feminine hygiene products when needed, and the director talks to them about proper disposal. She also has age-appropriate conversations with the girls about menstrual cycles. The home has an emergency medical fund. When girls are sick they are taken to a doctor with whom the home has a relationship, and when a dental situation is needed, it is taken care of. At this time, the home does not have annual medical checkups, and not all girls have vaccination cards due to DIF not providing all of the paperwork when girls arrive. However, the home does have annual vision exams. In case of emergencies, there is a clinic nearby that the home has identified. Girls are checked 3 times a week for lice and are treated when needed. The home's office space needs to be organized, and the medical records of the girls need to be kept in their files. The home has first aid kits that need to be checked for restocking. Plans are created for girls with special needs, but the home no longer takes in girls with disabilities.

- ☐ Keep medical files of the girls
- ☐ Provide annual dental and medical checkups for the girls
- ☐ Restock first aid kits

Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

In this area, the home is at a **THRIVING** level. The director had a nutritionist create the weekly meals for the home to ensure that the girls are getting properly balanced meals. The girls are provided with 1-2 snacks per day. The home has a cook that hygienically cooks the food but has not been annually trained in food safety and preparation. The director tries to ensure the girls get plenty of fruits and veggies, and protein is provided daily. The kitchen and storage are free of toxic substances and pests. Whenever there is a pest problem, it is dealt with immediately, and contaminated food is thrown out.

- ☐ Find a food safety and preparation course for the cook

Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

The home is currently **THRIVING** in this area. Civil Protection and Ciudad Ninez (branch of DIF) visit the home and evaluate the condition and structure of the property and buildings. Though the girl's dorm is having foundation issues, the building has been deemed safe for the time being. Eventually, the building will need to be replaced. In the meantime, the transition home (for girls ages 18+) needs remodeling. This is estimated to cost $30,000. The home has access to adequate water for drinking from a local water facility. Water is available and accessible to the girls for drinking. There is a safe method of sewage disposal. The property has been set up with exterior lighting and is well-lit at night. Currently, the home does not have an emergency plan due to recently having moved and not yet having the deed to have Civil Protection create a plan. The home has a maintenance guy (the cook's husband) who handles the property needs. The sinks, showers, and bathrooms are all functional. Showers have shower heads, and there are doors to bathrooms and showers. Changing stations provide privacy for the girls. Facilities are up to code, and no exposed wires or electrical outlets exist. The home has a generator in case of electrical outages.

- ☐ Create an annual maintenance plan for the home
- ☐ Remodel the "Transition Home" for girls 18+

Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

The home is at the level of **THRIVING**. Currently, all the girls are enrolled in school. A few attend private school, and others attend a school that was started for the orphanages in the area. The home has a computer and internet access and is available for the girls for homework. Any child needing an educational plan is assessed, and plans are created at the school. Children are encouraged to read, but the home wants to develop a more structured reading time. There is a bookshelf with over 80 age-appropriate books for the girls to choose from. All children are evaluated to assess reading levels. In cases where remediation is needed, the home and school work together to advance the children to their appropriate grade level. The home has age-appropriate supplies for the girls and is accessible under supervision. If a girl were to pursue higher education, the home has funding and housing available. The home and school are working to implement discussion on grades and educational plans for the girls. The director discusses and encourages the girls when their report cards come from the school. For the home to continue thriving in this area, it should continue to work with the schools to advance their girls' education and find ways to encourage the love of reading.

- ☐ Work with the schools to encourage educational plans
- ☐ Create a structured reading time for the girls

Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

Currently, the home is at a **THRIVING** level. All the girls have their own locker or dresser space for their personal items. The home ensures all girls have access to education, no matter their background or disability, and ensures they have access to the supplies and tutors they need. The girls participate in extracurricular activities 3-4 times per week. There are male and female mentors that have been doing ministry with the director for many years and act as role models and are available to them for counseling. Most of the staff act as mentors and counsel the girls as well. No steps are needed at this time.

Right to Guidance

SURVIVING | **SUSTAINING** | THRIVING

At this time, the home is at the **SUSTAINING** level. The home does not have a written profile or job description for new caregivers. However, the director has a process (which includes shadowing new caregivers) she uses with all new caregivers to ascertain that they are appropriate role models/mentors for the girls. Caregivers are assessed for their strengths and given tasks that reflect those strengths. Respect is a core value constantly reinforced through conversations with the director and in devotional teachings. A behavioral specialist works with Treasure House and meets weekly with the girls to cover behavioral, developmental, and emotional issues. The director is responsible for educating the girls regarding puberty and is looking for ways to strengthen the caregivers in their approaches to this developmental stage. Some orphanage staff has completed TBRI training at another nearby home, Love in Action, but further training in this approach is sought. Conversations are held among the director, caregivers, and the girls regarding responsible sexual behavior and sexual safety. There are no written plans for post-orphanage education and/or work. However, the director frequently talks with the girls approaching this life stage and helps them prepare for the next step. Discussions are held regarding plans and goals. Staff and volunteers are available to mentor the girls when difficult subjects arise.

- ☐ Establish more organized, written plans and processes regarding caregiver training and assessments.
- ☐ Plan recurring training and support for all staff in Trust Based Relational Intervention.
- ☐ Write a plan for post-orphanage education.

Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING | **SUSTAINING** | THRIVING

The home is currently at the **SUSTAINING** level in this area. The children can decide what to do in their free time within the choices established by the director. Although there is no formal process for having the girls participate in menu planning, the cook is well aware of the needs and likes of the girls and takes those into account when planning meals. Other options are available should there be something on the menu that a child cannot/will not eat. Menus are posted and viewable for the girls. The girls have their clothes and can choose what they wear. There are no formal individual development plans for the girls. Many age-appropriate activities are arranged for the girls, with opportunities to take a leadership position in those activities. The director assists in teaching leadership skills. There are no formal committees, but the girls participate in family decisions.

- ☐ Create individualized development plans for each girl.

Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

In this area, the home is at the level of **THRIVING**. Although not all the girls have birth certificates, this is the responsibility of DIF. The girls are taught how to make restitution and given options. All the girls have age-appropriate chores to help with the housekeeping that is done on a schedule, e.g., daily, weekly. National and local holidays are observed by recognizing each and having conversations in the home. When the opportunity arises (local festivals, etc.), the girls attend parades and other local activities celebrating holidays. The home is very clean and tidy, and the girls are taught how to keep everything in its place. Ethical responsibilities and the democratic process are taught through everyday activities at home and school. The director teaches the girls life skills such as budgeting, restaurant ordering/behavior, shopping, etc. Visitations have occurred with a home for the elderly where the girls interact with the residents to serve the community. They are also working on a program for litter control in their neighborhood. The director would like to find more ways for the girls to serve in their community. Again, major events are discussed with the girls during daily life (dinner conversation, etc.) Field trips are scheduled frequently and involve varied activities, e.g., visiting parks, attending festivals mentioned above, trips to the zoo, etc.

- ☐ Encourage DIF to get birth certificates.
- ☐ Find more social activities for the girls to serve.

Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING | **SUSTAINING** | THRIVING

Currently, the home is at the **SUSTAINING** level. Treasure House is a secure facility in a secure community. The grounds have excellent fencing and are located within a gated community. Additionally, neighbors are informed of the nature of the facility and provide a level of protection by keeping an eye on who visits or makes deliveries and understand the need for privacy among the inhabitants. There are adequate bathing and sleeping areas for the girls, and privacy is important. Again, staff are trained in TBRI at least annually and are supported inappropriate interactions with children of early childhood trauma. There is a policy of not allowing male caregivers/volunteers to be alone with the girls. However, there is no overarching, written child protection policy in place. Caregivers are aware that any abuse could result in retraining and possible dismissal. The girls are protected from unlawful/inappropriate employment practices. Currently, there is no regular training/education for the caregivers in recognizing and preventing abuse, nor are formal programs in place for the children. However, the director informs the children about recognizing and reporting unsafe situations involving adults. There is a visitor policy and a process for completing background checks, although needs to be formalized. DIF is responsible for completing intake assessments. The director also completes an informal evaluation of each new resident.

- ☐ Formalize ongoing education in the protection of abuse & neglect for both children and caregivers.
- ☐ Identify trainers for the various needed areas.
- ☐ Formalize and write out visitor and caregiver policies.

Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

Treasure House is **THRIVING** in this area. All the children are bathed and/or showered more than once a week (or as needed), and any hygiene issues are addressed, e.g., lice. There are no infants in the home. Each child has her own bed and bedding as well as adequate clothing. The children are taught to be kind to one another, and belittling, bullying, or unkind comments are addressed immediately, with alternative methods of conflict resolution offered as needed. The children are fully aware of the consequences of rule infractions, which are reviewed, and alternatives to rule-breaking are in place. Documented safety protocols and training are not in place; this is an area of need. The children have toothbrushes and a place to keep them, and their towels are washed regularly. A large play area with new playground equipment and other outdoor games exists. Additionally, the girls can participate in extra chores and/or work to earn privileges. Only one child is eligible to work in the community, and she keeps her earnings.

- ☐ Document safety protocols and training.

Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

The home is **THRIVING** in this area. Treasure House is in itself a spiritual community. The director leads daily devotions, and there is time for bible study and discussions. In addition, the girls attend church regularly on Sundays. The girls are encouraged to have their prayer practice, and the director provides role modeling. The library includes books and religious materials for the girls to use at age-appropriate levels. Some older girls participate in a bible school in Guadalajara, including community participation. The house has a designated area for worship, and the girls are encouraged to use it for private devotions. Nothing is needed at this time.

Finance Standard

SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | **THRIVING**

Currently, the home is at the **THRIVING** level. A mission organization in the United States mentors Treasure House. This organization monitors all of its financial needs and expenditures. The mission organization maintains financial accountability, and bank accounts are reconciled. There are insufficient duties or staff in the organization to merit segregation. There are budgets for specific projects, but the home does not maintain an ongoing budget. However, expenses are carefully monitored by the director.

- ☐ Ensure financial accounting is developed following accounting principles.
- ☐ Find an administrator for financial support.

Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING | **SUSTAINING** | THRIVING

In this area, the home is at the level of **SUSTAINING**. Regarding drinking water in Mexico, there is a very clear distinction between potable and nonpotable water. The staff knows what constitutes safe drinking water and that it is always provided. There is no organization chart per se. The house is small and operates as a family with no formal organizational chart required. The Board of Directors is the ministry's board that supports and guides Karen as director. Again, the personal approach to this facility is one of the things that makes it unique. This Board oversees Karen's projects and vision, and she reports to them regularly. The staff is receiving training in TBRI, which informs them of the effects of childhood trauma and how to deal with it in their population. There is no formal schedule of training in the care of a sick child. Formal personnel files are in process. There are regular meetings with staff, frequently occurring outside of a schedule. Treasure House has recently purchased the property and is awaiting delivery of the deed. As a "Civil Association," the property cannot be sold for personal gain.

- ☐ Establish more organization structure, e.g., personnel files.

Current Improvement Partners

Oak Life

Oak Life's mission is to educate and empower an international collective of orphanage caregivers, directors and advocates, who are prepared to sustainably and holistically care for abandoned children.

Loving children's homes often struggle, unable to grow and care for children to capacity. With insufficient staff who are trained and willing to dedicate their lives to orphan care, children stay on the streets. We intend to change this worldwide issue, and bring more children home. We are doing this in three simple ways: Train, Care, and Grow.

For a list of projects and opportunities to coordinate on go to www.ACHF.org/Projects

A CHILD'S
HOPE
FOUNDATION